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THE OLD PALACE OF BROMLEY-BY-BOW. BY ERNEST GODMAN, ARCHITECT. BEING THE THIRD MONOGRAPH OF THE COMMITTEE FOR THE SURVEY OF THE MEMORIALS OF GREATER LONDON.

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## PREFACE.

Such historical evidence and local tradition concerning the origin of the Old Palace as it was possible to collect has already been recorded in a previous publication of the Survey Committee—the volume on Bromley-by-Bow. Little therefore remains for this present monograph but to illustrate more fully the beautiful detail in decorative work—either of stone or wood carving, panelling, and modelled plaster, in all of which the Palace so richly abounded.

I would like here to acknowledge the help so freely given in my labours by the members of the Survey Committee and others. My thanks are due to Mr. H. Hemingway, owner of the Palace, and occupier of the southern portion from 1874 until its purchase by the London School Board in 1893; to Mrs. Papineau, who also resided there from 1859 to 1873, and to Mr. J. House; to these I am indebted for much valuable information concerning the traditions and later history of the building. I have also to thank Messrs. H. Clapham Lander, A. W. Waddington, Ernest A. Mann, A. E. Nutter, and other of my colleagues on the Survey Committee for their assistance in preparing the various drawings and photographs which illustrate the book, and of which due mention will be found in the following pages; and the Committee is indebted to the Board of Education, South Kensington, for permission to use the various photographs made from the ceilings, and to Lord Balcarres for a similar permission in respect of the ceiling at Balcarres House, Fife, N.B.

ERNEST GODMAN, Secretary of the Survey Committee.

37 Cheyne Walk, Chelsea, Oct., 1901.

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# AN INTRODUCTORY NOTE ON THE FOLLY OF DESTROYING THE OLD PALACE.

T is useless to cry over spilt milk, but if the destruction of what, in a sense, was the finest building in East London did nothing else, it at least awakened the public conscience and was the immediate cause of the founding of the Committee for the Survey of the Memorials of Greater London, under whose auspices this monograph, the third of the

series, is now presented.

The fairly complete record which we have already given perhaps makes it needless here to go over the same ground again; it is to be assumed that those who subscribe to the present volume will already have become possessed of the former which this Committee prepared for the London County Council, but in so important a building as the Old Palace there was necessarily much that it was impossible to record in the limited

space at our disposal in the larger volume.

Mr. Godman's records of the old Palace, therefore, together with the interesting collection of drawings which he succeeded in making before everything was cleared away, will give some idea of what was lost to Greater London by this most shameless piece of destruction; but I would like here to say a few words from the point of view not of the antiquarian, but of the citizen who holds that national history expressed in the local records of building is too sacred a thing to be lightly ignored by public bodies; and who believes that the time has come for us to ask of those whom we elect to manage our affairs, a more educated and enlightened view in regard to what is still left to us. It is an axiom with the average Englishman that he may do what he likes with his own;—one of the sacred rights of private property, it would seem, is, that if you have anything beautiful you may destroy it. But this does not extend to public property, nor is it a point of view that can be held by public bodies.

Mr. Godman has confined himself, therefore, to giving a concise description of a series of the pictures here following, some from drawings, some from photographs made by members of the Survey Committee, and some by the South Kensington Museum. Leaving these to tell their own story I would here merely like to point out what might have been done with a little enlightened action on the part of the London School Board. We now have on the site of King James' Palacea well built Board School, and by well built I mean of course built in accordance with all the ordinary regulations, sanitary, solid, grey, grim, and commonplace. What we might have had with a little thought, and with no extra expense to the rates, would have been an ideal Board school with a record of every period of English history from the time of Henry VIII. as a daily object lesson for the little citizens of Bromley, a school-house that contained panelling

of James I., carving of William III., the modelled plaster work of the Scotch craftsmen of the early Jacobean time, rooms all the more gracious for the sumptuous additions of the later Stuarts, records of the time of Queen Anne, fireplaces, overmantels, and panelling of the Georges, Adam's work, and the black and white marble flooring laid down by the rich merchants of wealthy Middlesex who lived in the Palace up to the time of the expansion of London in the beginning of this century,—a school-house to be proud of. When we see records of this kind at Eton, at Marlborough, at Harrow, at Haileybury, we say how blessed are our English public schools to have such a historic background for our sons to grow up amongst. It perhaps does not occur to us that to the little Board school child, who surely needs it much more than the sons of our aristocracy or our bourgeoisie, such historic associations are infinitely more necessary, more valuable, more refining. I know of few records at any of our great public schools that would come up to what the London School Board here destroyed, and I am sure there is not a public school in England but would have been proud to have as its central building the Old Palace of Bromley.

I shall be met no doubt with the argument that modern Board schools have to be built according to certain regulations, and that these do not admit of the modification of old or historic buildings. Possibly this may be so, if it be, it is high time the Board devoted itself to getting those regulations altered. To urge them in this instance is mere excuse for want of imagination. Even the notorious Board, now fortunately defunct, in whose reign the old Palace was removed, had among its members several gentlemen who were genuine educationalists, and no educationalist of any repute would dare nowadays to dispute the value of historic record

and noble building.

It may be urged, and no doubt with some truth, that the majority of the members of a body like to the London School Board are not educationalists and do not profess to be, that their object is to fulfil functions of a financial character relating to the rates, and to see that certain laws with regard to the teaching of children in a certain direction are carried out. This argument does not go far. To admit that the having a noble school-house is a wise objective for a School Board, as for a higher grade school, is tantamount to admitting that the objective might in this instance have been attained without any appreciable addition to the rates; all difficulties of a structural or architectual nature in preserving a building like the Old Palace as a nucleus, were quite easy to surmount.

The Board, in short, did not know what it was doing, it was in the hands of advisers who were equally ignorant; it committed a foolish action and has had to take the consequence. Like other public bodies that from time to time have acted similarly, it has been pilloried for its folly. Meantime,

however, the Palace is lost to us.

## DESCRIPTION OF THE ILLUS-TRATIONS.

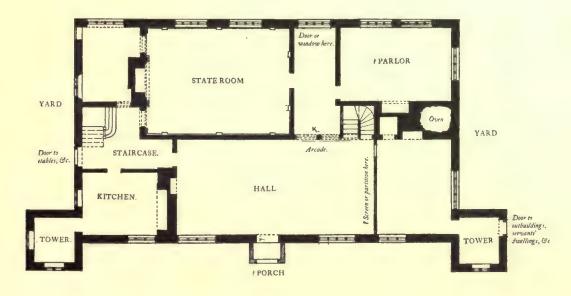
### AN ATTEMPT TO RESTORE THE ORIGINAL BUILDING.

On plate 37 an attempt has been made to reconstruct the external view of the Palace with its adjoining buildings according to the original design. In determining the positions and forms of the various features advantage has been taken of the numerous discoveries made at the time of the demolition; door and window frames and posts which still remained in position are shown on the plans, others were built up and their positions defined only by the filling of later brickwork; while in some cases the evidence rests only on accidental discoveries of the original work rescued in more or less fragmentary form from these built-up openings and other parts of the structure.

Comparison also has been made with contemporary buildings in the neighbourhood: Charlton House, near Greenwich, Kent, which is a reputed John Thorpe design, has many points of resemblance to the Palace; Kirby Castle, Bethnal Green, which was also a design of John Thorpe; the early 17th century mansion now known as the 'Workmen's Home,' 217 Bow Road; Bromley House, the manor house of the upper manor of Bromley; and Aston Hall, near Birmingham.

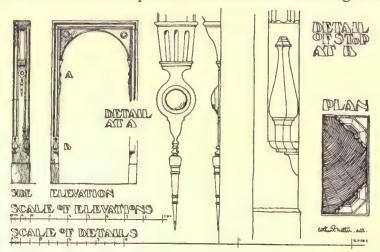
The plan, as restored below, contained many features of interest; and although a comparatively small building, the setting out and decoration of the rooms was dignified.

Plan of Old Palace



Hall

The hall was one storey in height, & all traces of the screen, if there ever had been one, had vanished in the subsequent alteration and remodelling; the fireplaces and almost all the panelling being also replaced at that period. At k was an arcade of moulded oak posts and arches almost complete, leading to the garden and the smaller stairs. One of the arched openings, illustrated here, is preserved in the South Kensington Museum.



Staircase

The great staircase, situated at the south end of the building was also intact. It was constructed round a square well hole, the handrails, balusters, newels, and other parts being entirely of oak, elaborately moulded, and of large dimensions. Details of the various parts are given on plate 35. Many of the internal doorways still retained the original moulded solid oak frames, the mouldings on the side posts ending with carved stops about two feet from the floor. In almost every case these mouldings and stops were varied in design, that shown on plate 12 being one of the simplest.

State room

Doorways

It is scarcely necessary to do more than refer to the description of the state room already published,\* also the numerous photographs & drawings on plates 9-21 of this book, illustrating the fireplace with its carving and arms of James I.; the ceiling with the modelled ornaments, ribs, panels of heroes, and the Royal Arms; and the panelling with carved pilasters and frieze. This room has been re-erected complete in the south hall of the South Kensington Museum, with the exception of the moulded oak door frames on either side of the fireplace, and the 18th century pine chimney-piece inserted in the original opening. Along the frieze at the top of this was carved the inscription from *Proverbs* xv., v. 17:

## BETTER·IS·A·DINNER·OF·HERBS·WHERE·LOVE·IS

\* 'Survey of Bromley-by-Bow,' pp. 33-40.

Fireplaces

The original woodwork of the other fire-places had been replaced by carved and moulded chimney-pieces of later dates, chiefly of the time of the 18th century alterations. The most elaborate of these was in the room over the State room. It was of pine with carved swags and pilasters, and as late as 1873 still retained a large medallion in the centre with carved heads of James I. and his wife Anne of Denmark, surrounded by a wreath of holly leaves. Behind this was discovered the original carved stone fire-place, with coloured and gilt frieze.

Several other similar stone fireplaces still remained in various parts of the

Palace, one of them being illustrated on plate 12.

That the towers were originally built higher is proved by the fact that, while the timber framing of the main roofs was intact, the pyramidal roofs on the towers, and the ceilings immediately below them, were formed almost entirely of fragments of the oak mullioned windows and beams, some moulded, of the earliest date, and evidently placed there from other parts of the building. The lead cupolas on top are conjectural, but are of a form quite common at the period, and similar to those at Charlton House.

External Towers

The windows are restored mainly from the evidence of the original openings, mostly built up in the 18th century alterations, assisted by reference to those at Aston Hall and Charlton House. That shown on plate 18 is restored from the various portions found in the roofs, walls, and blocked-up window-openings of the house, and now preserved in South Kensington Museum.

Windows

There were two kinds of windows—those with large moulded oak frames, which are assumed to have been placed on the principal front, the east, and those composed entirely of moulded bricks. These latter were evidently on the north and west sides of the building; one long low window, five lights wide, still remained, although blocked up, in the north wall and gave light to the 'Kitchen,' or the north end of the Hall, as it is assumed to have originally been. There were also evidences of similar windows in other parts of this and the west wall.

Numbers of moulded bricks, ovolo-moulded mullions, and others, forming parts of cornices and string courses, were found built into the original window openings; while in one of these (on the garden front of the North-west room on ground floor) was found the fragment of 15th cen-

tury carved Purbeck marble, already described.\*

The chimneys were of various sizes and shapes, and in almost all cases had been rebuilt from the roof upwards. Only in one instance at the south end of the house, as shown in the sketch, was the original moulded brick plinth left. Plans of some others are given on plate 4.

Chimney stacks

<sup>\* &#</sup>x27;Survey of Bromley-by-Bow,' p. 36.



External decoration of brickwork

The decoration on the face of the brickwork shown in plate 36 was discovered plastered over, behind the oak panelling on the South face of the chimney stack at the end of the State room at a height of about 15 feet from the ground level. The body of the chimney stack was of red bricks, on these diapers of a blue-grey colour had been painted to the pattern shown, and the joints lined with white. There were also remains of cement quoins at the corners of the stack.

The use of cement quoins instead of stone was apparently common at this period in districts where stone was not easily obtainable, and there is a notable example still left in the neighbourhood—Eastbury House, Barking, about five miles distant, built in 1572-1573. This is constructed entirely of red bricks, all the windows, gables, doorways, mouldings and other external features which in the first case were constructed of moulded brickwork, being cemented over to represent stone.

It was also a usual custom to diaper the external faces of the walls, using black or vitrified bricks for the purpose; but it would perhaps be difficult to find a contemporary example of painted diapers.

It is difficult to understand the reason for the decoration in such a position, the chimney stack, so far as could be seen, never having been on an outside wall of the house, unless we suppose that it may have formed part of an earlier, and possibly smaller, building, which was incorporated with the Palace. There were, however, so far as one could see, no other features in the building that could justify such an assumption.

Outbuildings and domestic offices The timber framed buildings in the foreground were traditionally the outbuildings containing the servants' and retainers' dwellings, offices, and outbuildings attached to the Palace; and have already been fully described. † In this case tradition is helped by the following facts:

† Survey of Bromley-by-Bow, pp. 41, 42.

1. The nearness of these buildings to the Palace. That they were of the same date is proved by the fact of oak framed windows being discovered in the walls of the 'Seven Stars' public-house, with mouldings identical with those in the Palace, described above.

2. The door in the north tower of the Palace, communicating with these buildings, and the windows in the north wall overlooking them.

3. The position of the underground passage.

4. The small amount of accommodation for servants in the Palace, compared with the size of the building, and the scale of the internal

planning.

The oak framing was very massive, and although covered over on the outside with weather boarding in the 18th century, & plastered inside, was in perfect condition at the time of the demolition of the 'Seven Stars,' the corner building, in 1895. The timber was framed as shown in the drawing; and the upper storey overhung the lower on the north side. The greater part of these outbuildings still remain, and face the High Street.

## THE CEILINGS AND MODELLED PLASTER WORK.

Of modelled plaster ceilings three only remained, & are shown on plates 3-4. There were also three plaster friezes, two of them complete, along the top of the walls of the north-west rooms on the ground and upper floors, the former illustrated by the lithograph on plate 33, and the latter by the photograph on plate 34. The remains of the third, consisting of three repeats only, was on the chimney breast of the room above the State room, and is shown on plate 33. The handling of these varies considerably, that on plate 34 being perhaps the best; it is essentially English in design, with its open strapwork scrolls, flowers and fruits, while the others partake much more of the Italian character. All these friezes were covered by the later work, the two former by the 18th century panelling, which extended from the floor to the ceiling, and the latter by the carved pine mantelpiece, which also covered an original stone fireplace similar to that shown on plate 12, with a richly carved, coloured and gilt frieze.

Ceilings & friezes

Of the ceilings the setting out of those in the ground floor rooms was on lines more or less common to the period.

Examples similar to that in the State room are still preserved in the 'Panel room,' Balcarres House, Fife, N.B.; Leathersellers' Hall, St. Helen's, London—illustrated by Malcolm;\* several also are illustrated by Gotch;† and there are no doubt many others of similar design. The details vary considerably in each ceiling, but in that at Balcarres House

State room ceiling

<sup>\* &#</sup>x27;119 Views in London and in the Vicinity of the Metropolis,' 1836. † 'Architecture of the Renaissance in England,' fo. London, 1891.

illustrated on plate 22 it will be seen there are panels similar to those on the Old Palace ceiling containing figures of ancient heroes.\*

Ceiling of north west room

With regard to the ceiling in the north-west room it is interesting to note, that in the ceiling of the principal room of the 'Workman's Home,' † not only is the design similar, but the ornament running along the ribs of both ceilings is cast from the same moulds, thus proving that both were the work of the same hand, and executed within a short period of each other. There are also in this latter ceiling the little cherubs' heads, with halo and wings only, similar to those bordering the panels containing the heroes in the State room ceiling, plate 21.

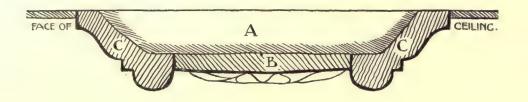
There are also similar ceilings to this at Broughton Castle, Oxon; University Library, Cambridge; and Aston Hall, near Birmingham. In this

last the detail is much bolder and simpler than at the Palace. ‡

of room on first floor

Of the third and perhaps the most beautiful, which is illustrated in plan on plate 4, and by photographs on plate 28, the writer has, so far, not seen a similar example. The design is formed by intersecting circles and quatrefoils, each about ten feet diameter, with grotesque heads, shown in detail in the lithographs on plates 31-32, to mark their intersections; the ribs are ornamented with a running design of nuts and various fruits, treated in a much less conventional manner than in the other ceilings, and the panels between the ribs ornamented with the fan, pomegranate, and other subjects shown in detail on plates 30 to 32. Only one-third of this ceiling was left, but the design of the whole is shown in the plan on plate 4.

The sketch given here shows a section through one of the ceiling ribs.



† Ibid., p. 38.

<sup>\*</sup> See also 'Survey of Bromley-by-Bow,' p. 38.

Gotch, Arch Ren., pt. V., p. 23.

Construction of ceilings

In construction all ceilings were similar, and appeared to be built up as follows: The ceilings were formed with two coats of plaster; on the first coat the design was drawn or marked and the body of the ribs (A) 'roughed in' with plaster; the underside of this was roughened or scored to take the cast work (B), which varied from \( \frac{1}{4} \) to \( \frac{1}{2} \) inch in thickness, & was formed of plaster mixed with some hardening material like marble dust. The outer mouldings (c) as will be plainly seen by reference to the various photographs, were then run by hand, not struck from centres, and the ribs were complete. The panels on the face of the ceiling were next applied, and the finishing coat of plaster was put on to the surfaces of the ceiling between these and the ribs. A much larger proportion of hair was used than is the custom at the present day.

The pendants on the ceiling of the State room appeared to be fixed in the same manner as the ribs, the cores being strengthened by long nails

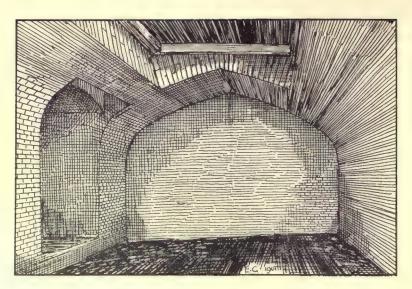
placed crosswise through them into the ceiling ribs.

The State room ceiling was the only one, in the first instance, that was purchased by the authorities of the South Kensington Museum, and removed thence during the demolition. The remains of the two others, consisting of one or more repeats of each ornament and section of ribs, were collected by the writer (careful drawings of these ceilings being also made at the time), and these remains, together with the friezes above mentioned, were by him subsequently handed to the Museum for reconstruction.

### THE UNDERGROUND PASSAGE.

Following the usual tradition in such cases, an underground passage was commonly supposed to lead from beneath the Palace to one or other of the following buildings: West Ham Abbey, King John's Palace at Old Ford, and Boleyn Castle at East Ham. During the demolition careful search was made for remains of this passage, and it was found to actually exist. Starting from the cellar under the 'scullery' in the north-east corner, an arched opening in the east wall led into a square brick chamber eight feet by ten, with walls and arched roof of red bricks; a section across the chamber is shown in the sketch. Continuing northward the passage still retained its arched roof and was blocked by brick walls, evidently of dates subsequent to the passage, at every few feet. It was again accessible by the trap door in the yard of the adjoining house, shown at G, on plate 1, but beyond here had apparently been destroyed to make room for the foundations of this house. As the work of demolition proceeded these portions of the passage were filled in with rubbish, and so prevented the possibility of further exploration. Probably the passage made a bend here eastward (it did not run under the 'Seven Stars'), and curving round by the north side of the churchyard ran into, or alongside, the river Lea. The crown of the vault is said to have given way a few

Direction of underground passage



years since in the road at the north-west corner of the churchyard and to have let a van down.

The following notes may be of interest, and throw some light on the various statements as to the termination of the passage.

West Ham Abbey

At West Ham Abbey, the Cistercian Abbey of Stratford Langthorne, a passage somewhat similar to that at the Palace was discovered in 1845, and is fully described in Fry's 'East and West Ham,' p. 140. Its general direction was, however, eastward, and terminated at some distance from the abbey in a marsh ditch, from which it was inferred that the passage had been an ancient monastic sewer.

King 'John's Palace

At King John's Palace, Old Ford (the remains of which, consisting of some boundary walls, gateway, and a few fragments of buildings, are situated in Old Ford Road, about half a mile north of the Old Palace) the writer is informed, by those who have seen it, that an arched subterranean passage exists, commencing beneath the garden of the house at the southeast corner of Wick Lane, running southward under the 'Sounding Alley' on the opposite side of Old Ford Road, then continuing in the same direction across Tredegar Road near the spot occupied by the 'Joiners' Arms' public house. In this part of the passage a stone coffin was found some 25 years ago.

Boleyn Castle

At Boleyn Castle, a building of 16th century date, careful search at the base of the tower, the supposed termination of the passage, has failed to reveal any trace of the existence of such a passage.

It will appear from these notes that very little dependence can be placed on the traditions respecting the termination of the passage. That it existed there can be no doubt; it was much too large and carefully built to be a sewer; it is possible, therefore, that it was used as a secret means of access to the house from the river.

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HERE ENDS THE THIRD MONOGRAPH OF THE COM-MITTEE FOR THE SURVEY OF THE MEMORIALS OF GREATER LONDON, ON THE OLD PALACE OF BROM-LEY-BY-BOW, WHICH WAS WRITTEN BY ERNEST GODMAN FROM NOTES AND DRAWINGS MADE IN THE PALACE DURING THE TIME OF ITS DESTRUCTION IN 1893-1894. WITH AN INTRODUCTORY NOTE BY C. R. ASHBEE.PRINTED FOR THE COMMITTEE ATTHE ESSEX HOUSE PRESS, BOW, MDCCCCII.



Published in England by Edward Arnold, 37 Bedford Street, Strand; and in America by Samuel Buckley & Co., 100 William Street, New York.

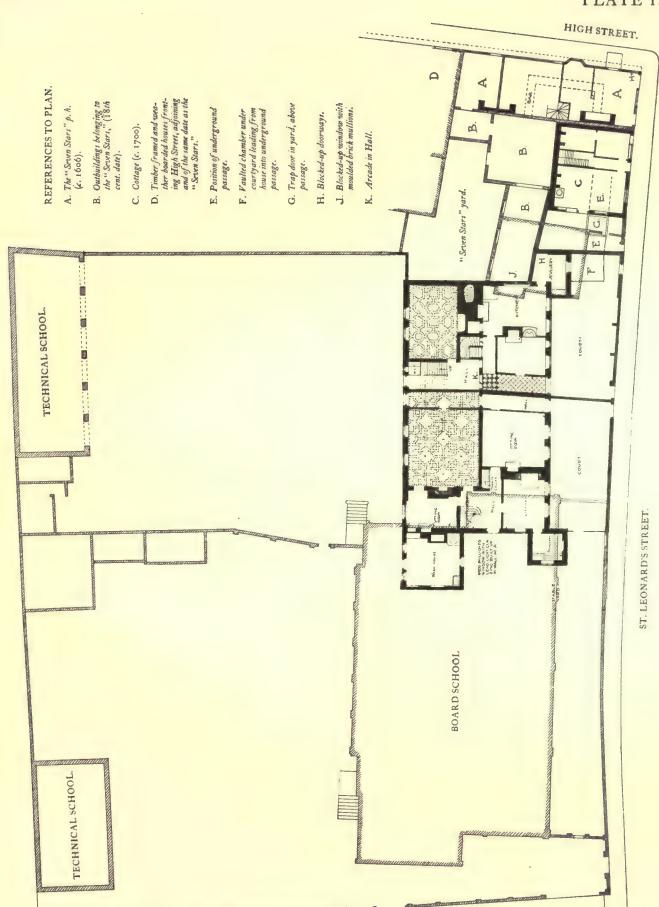
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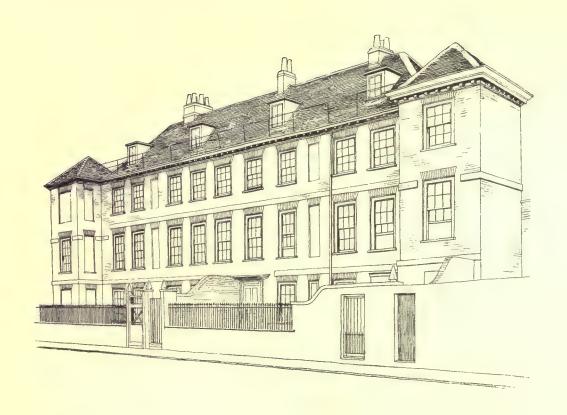
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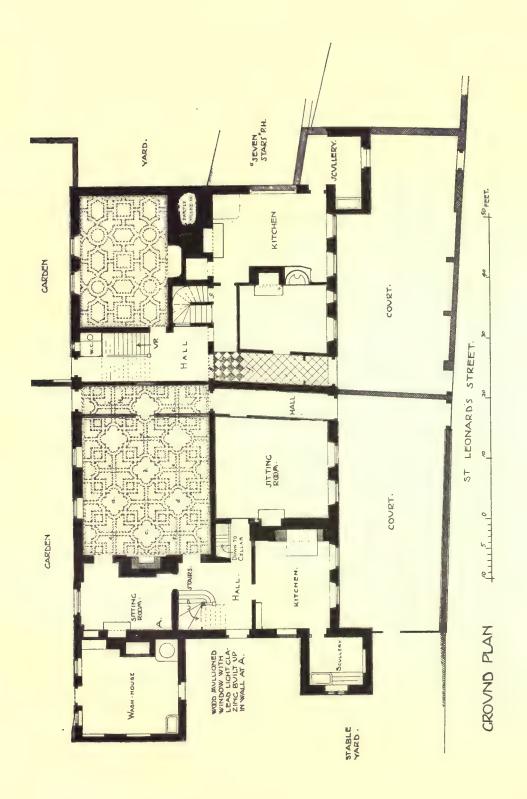


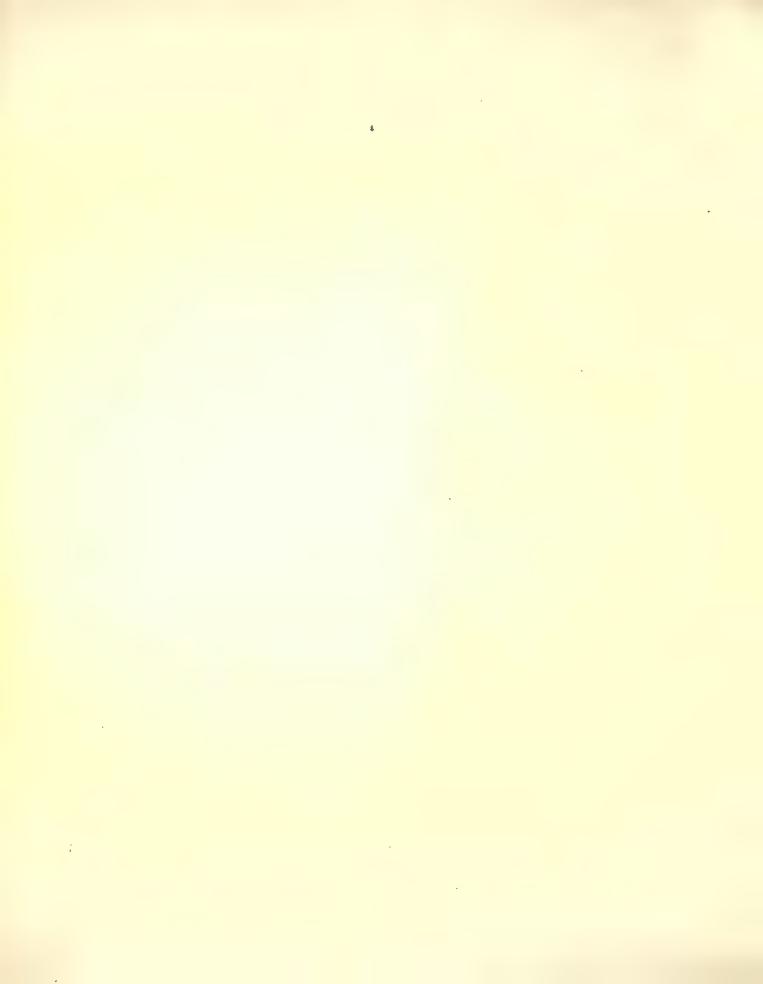
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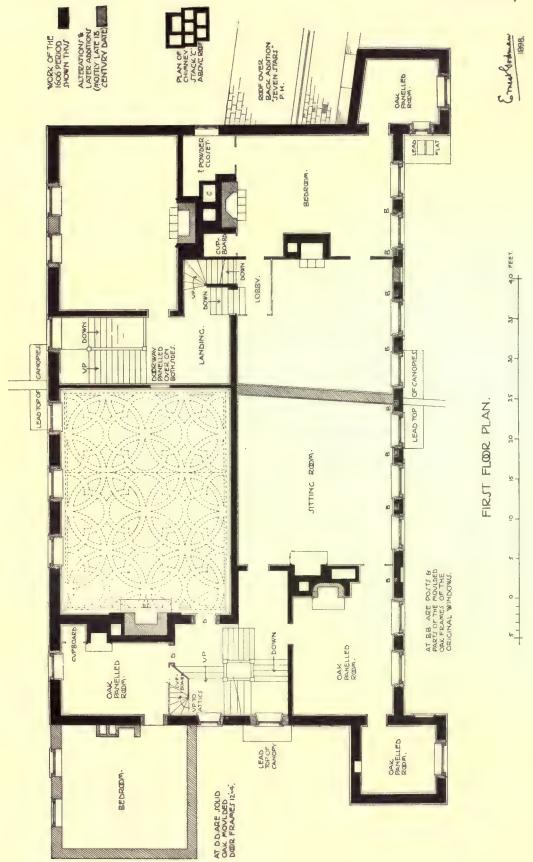


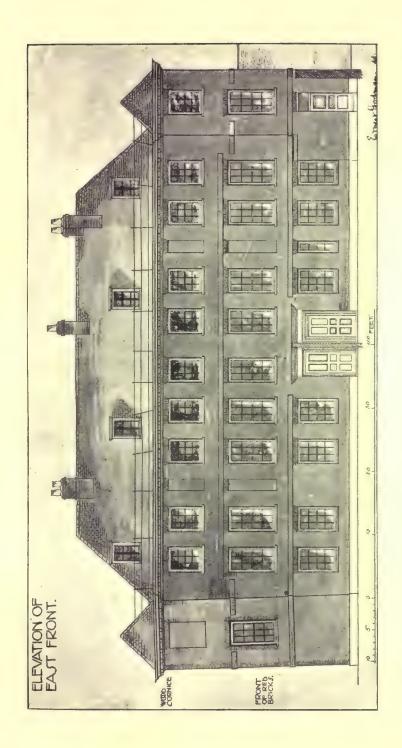
GROUND VIEW OF PALACE FROM THE NORTH-EAST.

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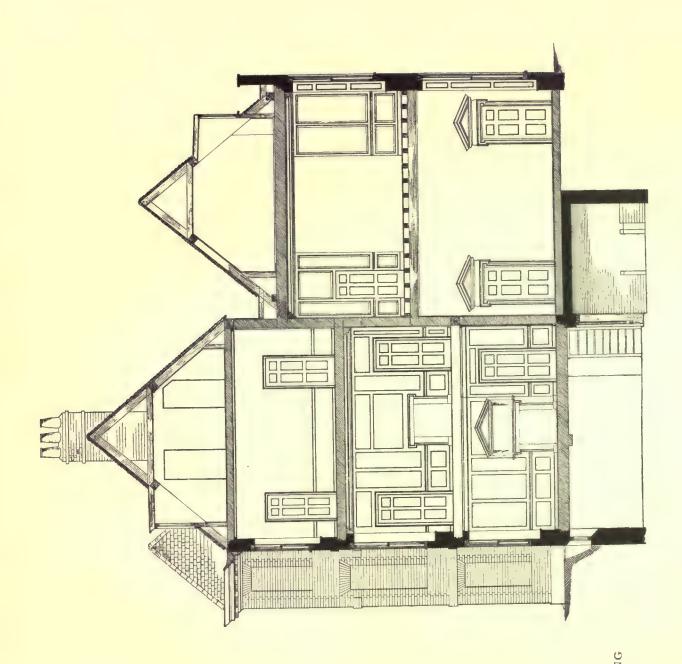






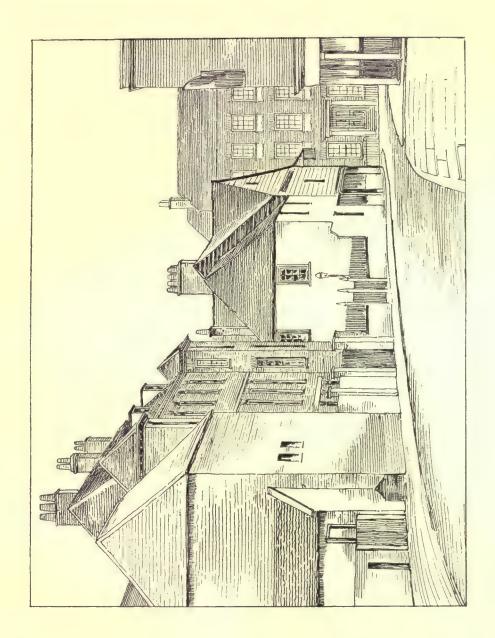
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## PLATE 6.



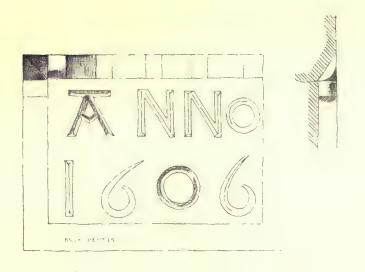
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VIEW OF PALACE AND ADJOINING BUILDINGS FROM THE SOUTH.





CARVED STONE ON SOUTH SIDE OF HOUSE.

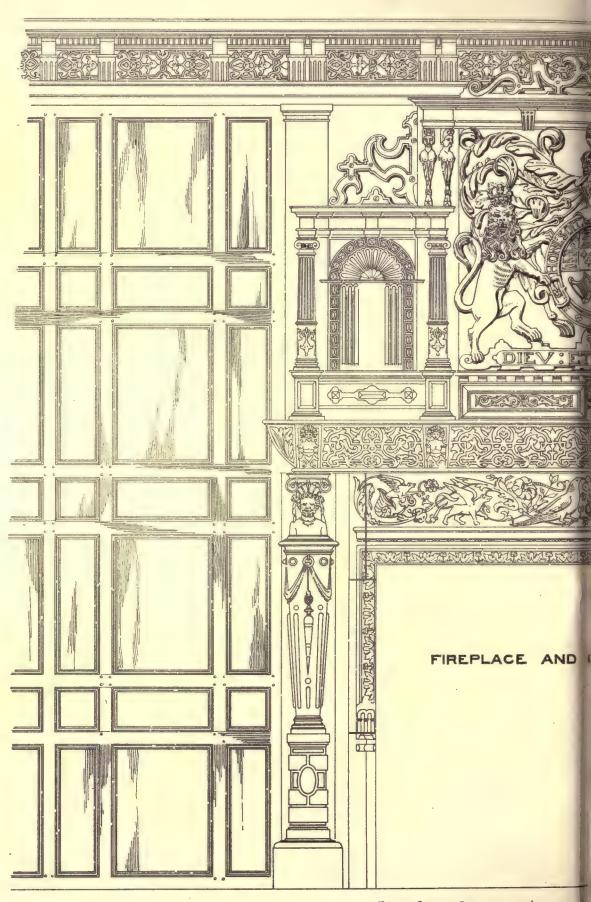


FIREPLACE IN STATE ROOM.

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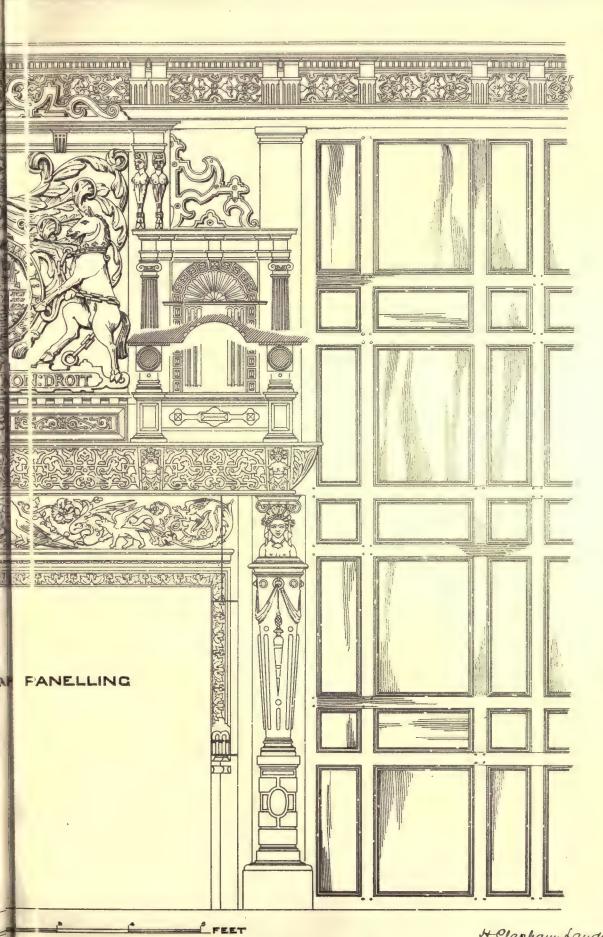
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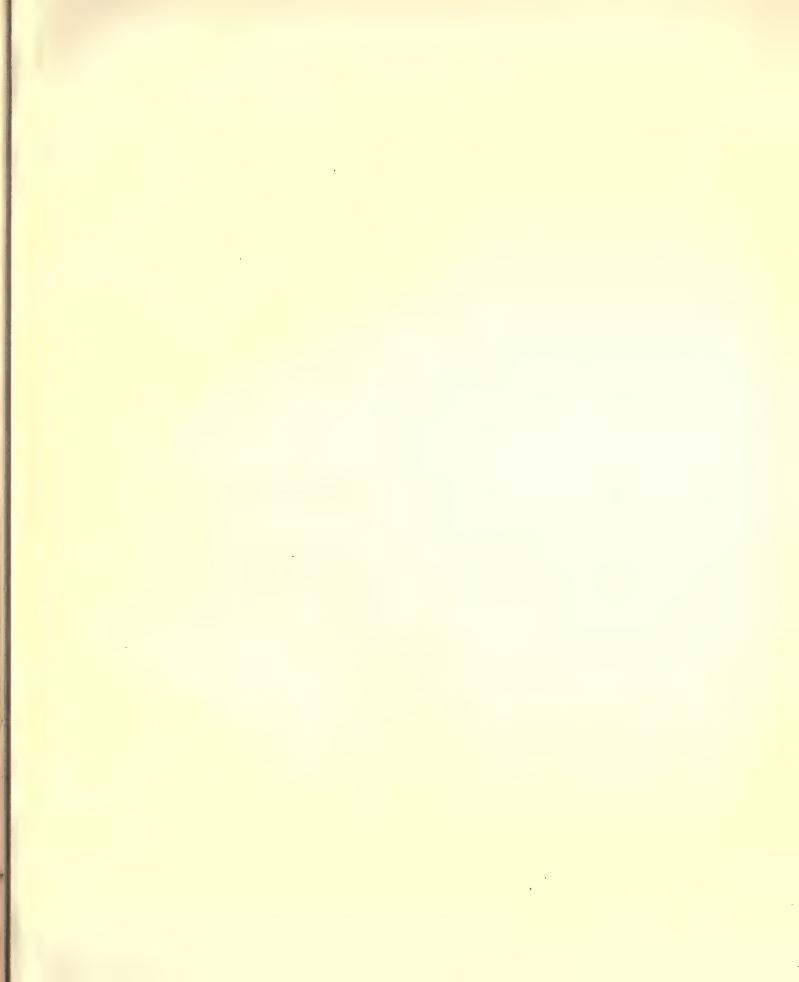
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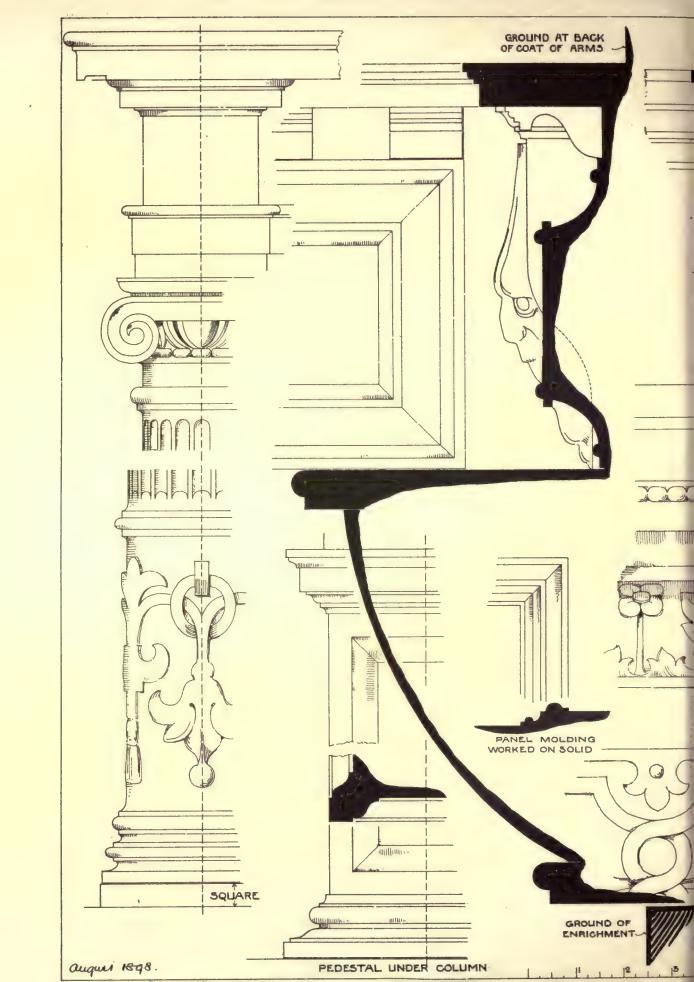
SCALE OF HUNGHAND

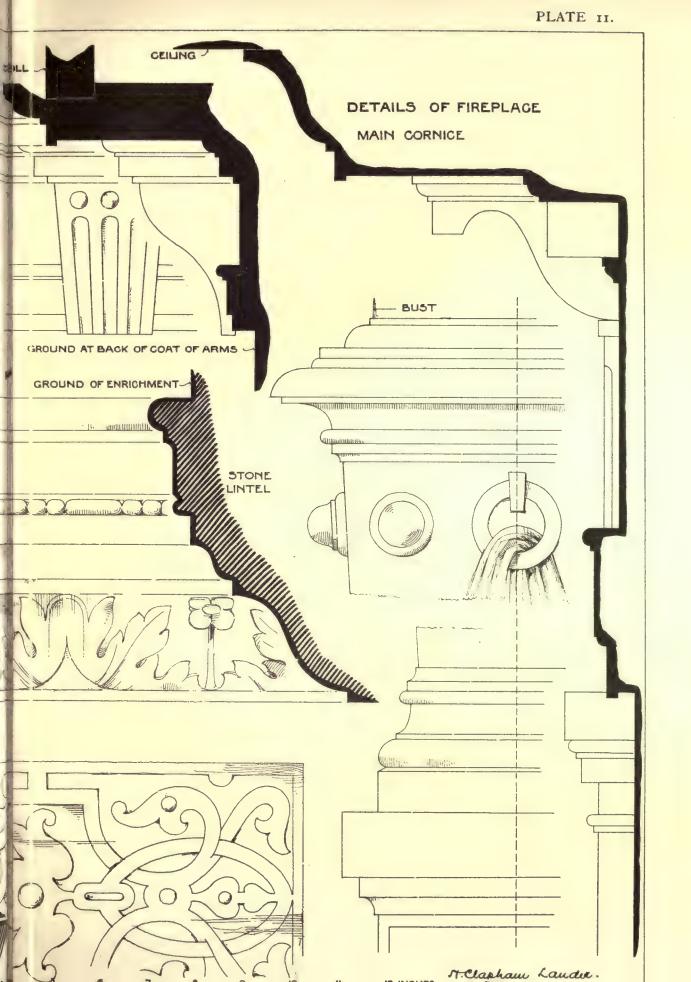


H. Clapham Lander

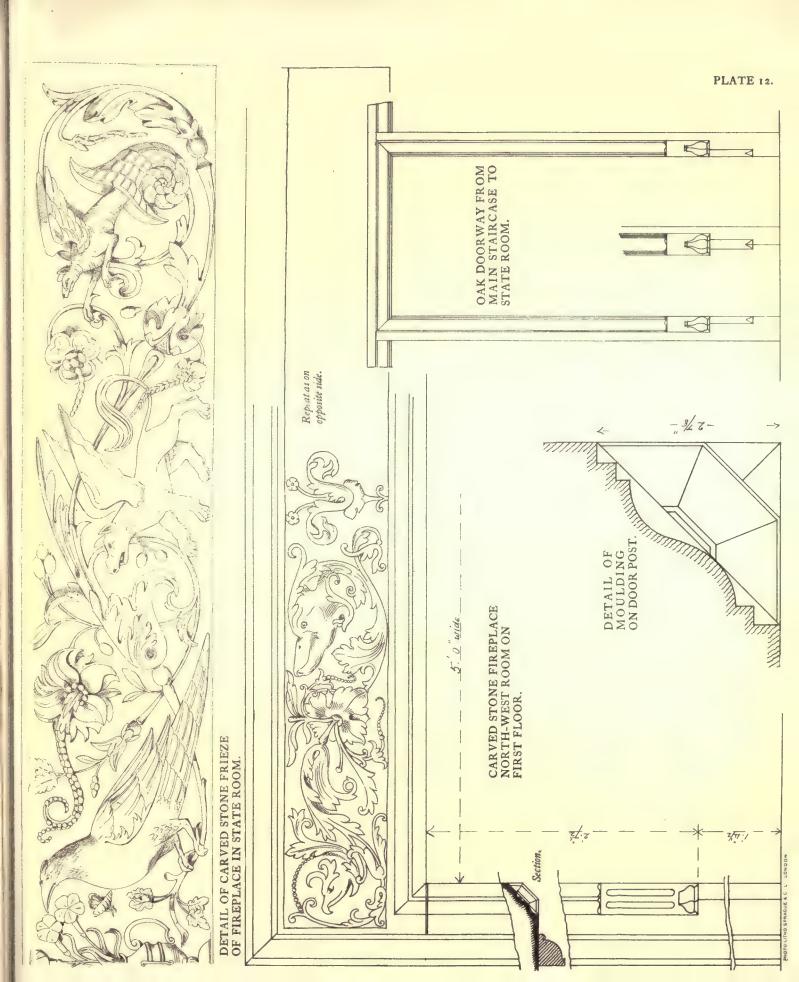




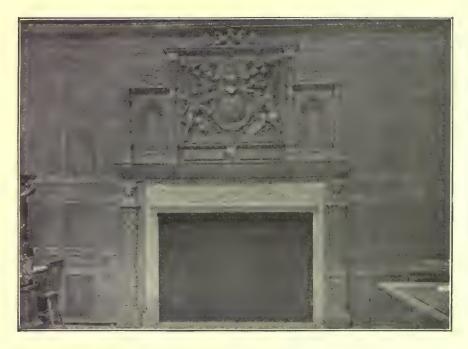






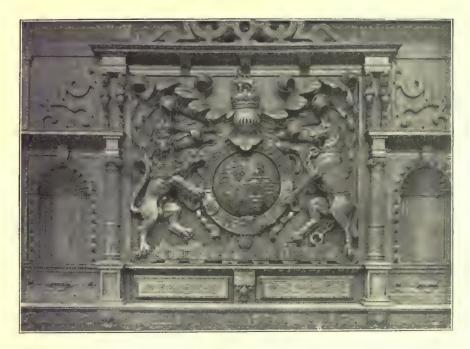






FIREPLACE AND PANELLING OF STATE-ROOM, AS RE-ERECTED IN SOUTH KENSINGTON MUSEUM.





DETAIL OF UPPER PART OF FIREPLACE IN STATE-ROOM.





DETAIL OF PILASTER AND CARVING. FIREPLACE IN STATE-ROOM.





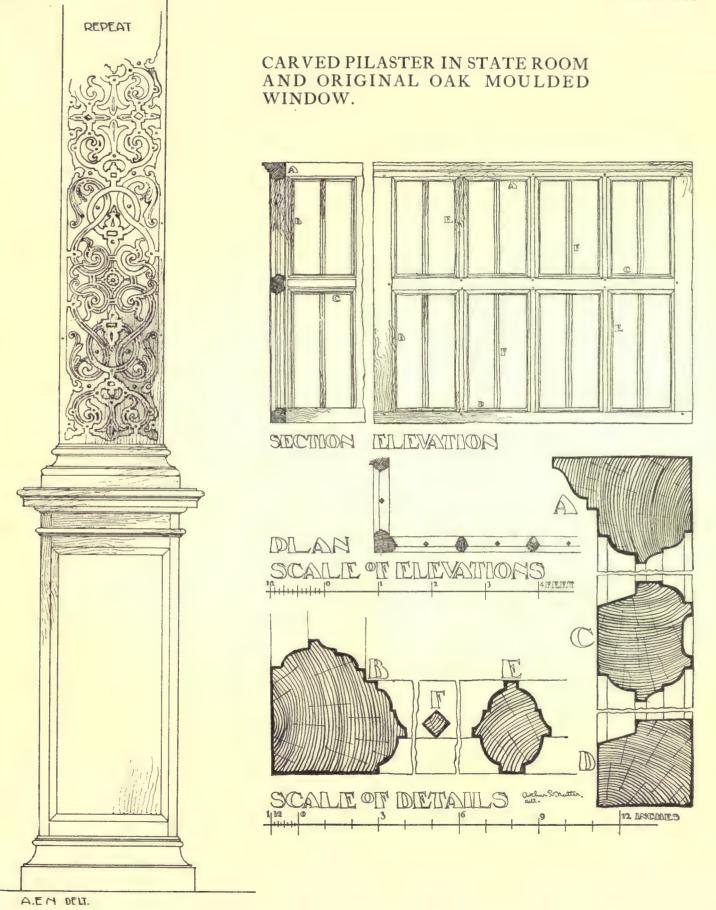
DETAIL OF PILASTER AND CARVING. FIREPLACE IN STATE-ROOM.



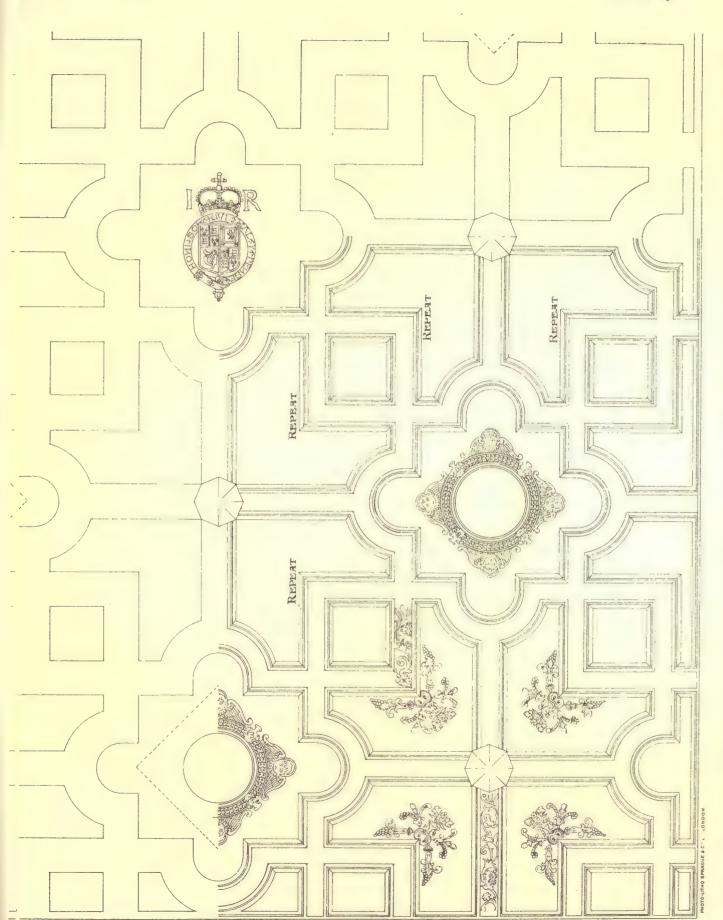


PANELLING, WITH CARVED PILASTER, AND PART OF CEILING, STATE ROOM.

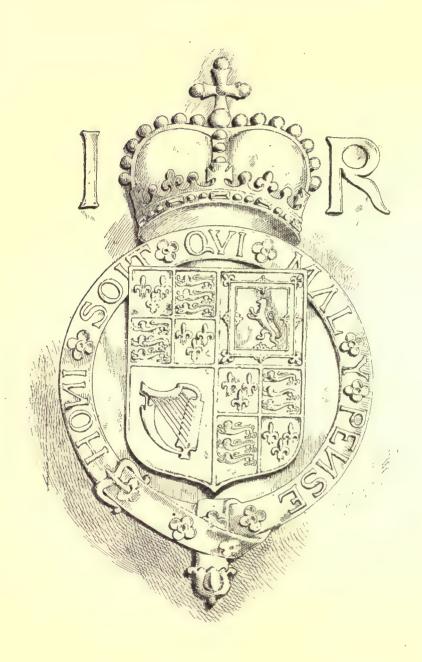
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ARMS OF JAMES I. CEILING OF STATE ROOM.



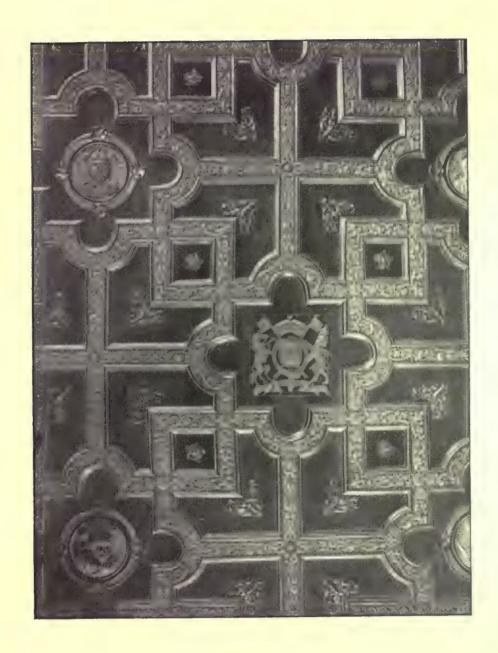




CEILING OF STATE ROOM, SHOWING THE ROYAL ARMS AND MODELLED FIGURE OF HECTOR.







CEILING IN "PANEL ROOM." BALCARRES HOUSE, FIFE, N.B.





NORTH WEST ROOM, GROUND FLOOR, SHOWING CEILING AND FRIEZE.





CEILING IN NORTH-WEST ROOM, GROUND FLOOR.





PANEL IN CEILING. NORTH-WEST ROOM, GROUND FLOOR.





PANEL IN CEILING, NORTH-WEST ROOM, GROUND FLOOR.





PANEL IN CEILING, NORTH-WEST ROOM, GROUND FLOOR.





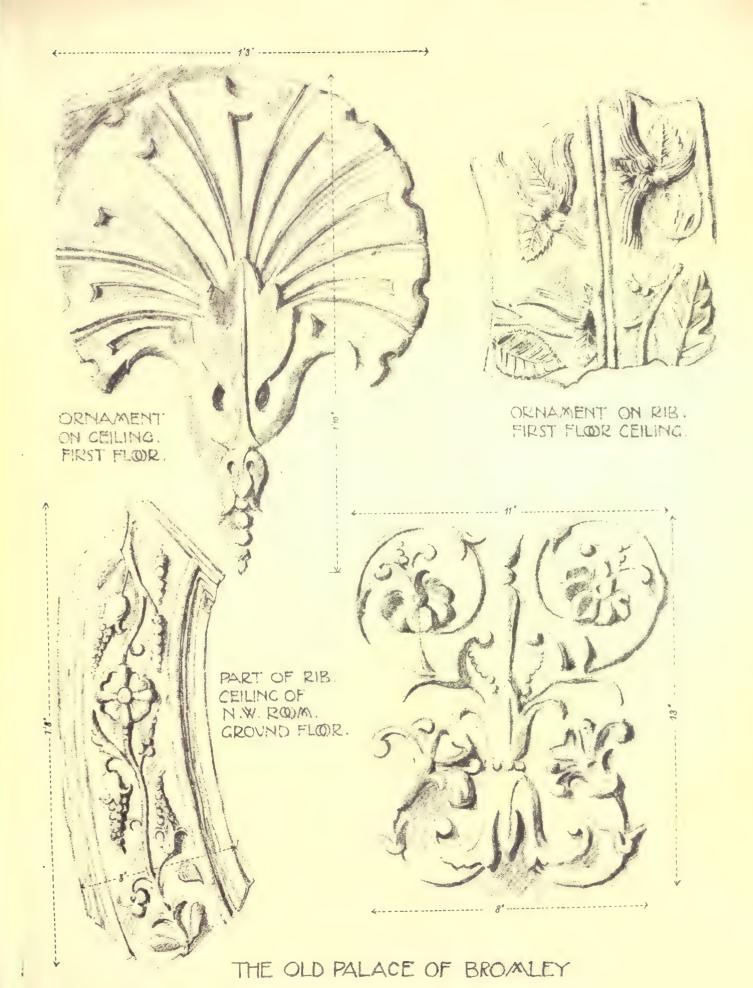
PART OF CEILING OF ROOM, FIRST FLOOR.





PART OF CEILING OF ROOM, ON FIRST FLOOR.





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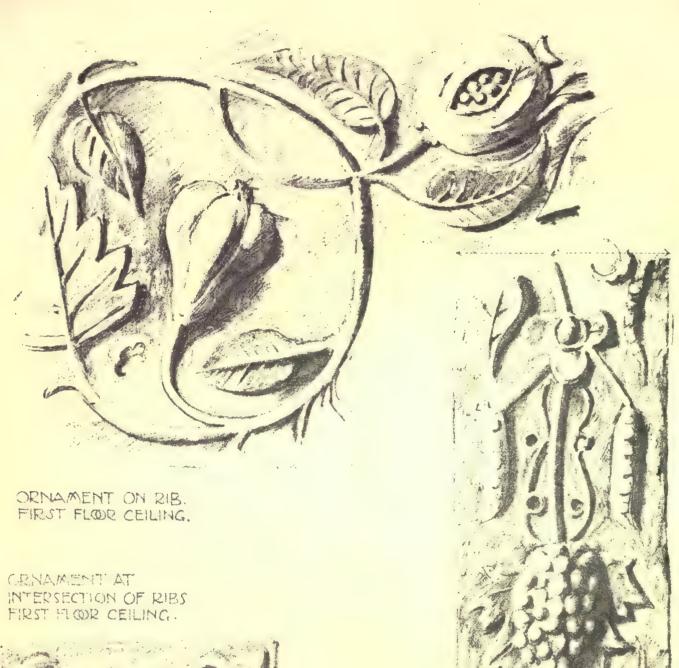
WEST ROM, FIRST FLOR.

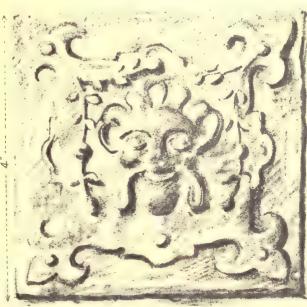


THE OLD PALACE OF BROMLEY

NORTH WEST ROM GROVND FLOR INK PHOTO SPRAGUE & CT LTCLON





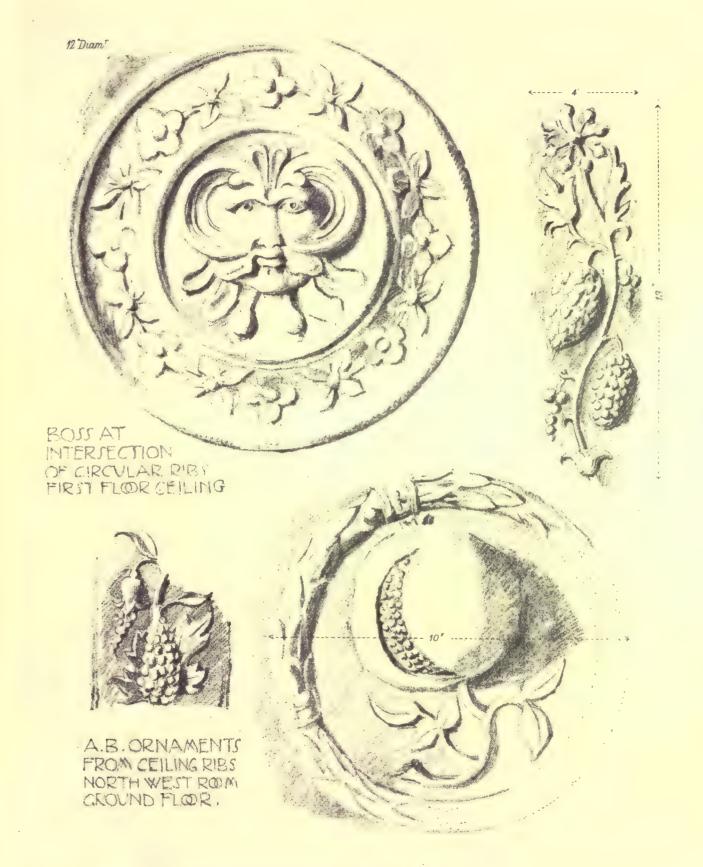


ORNAMENT ON CEILING RIB. N.W. ROM GROUND FLOOR.



THE OLD PALACE OF BROMLEY



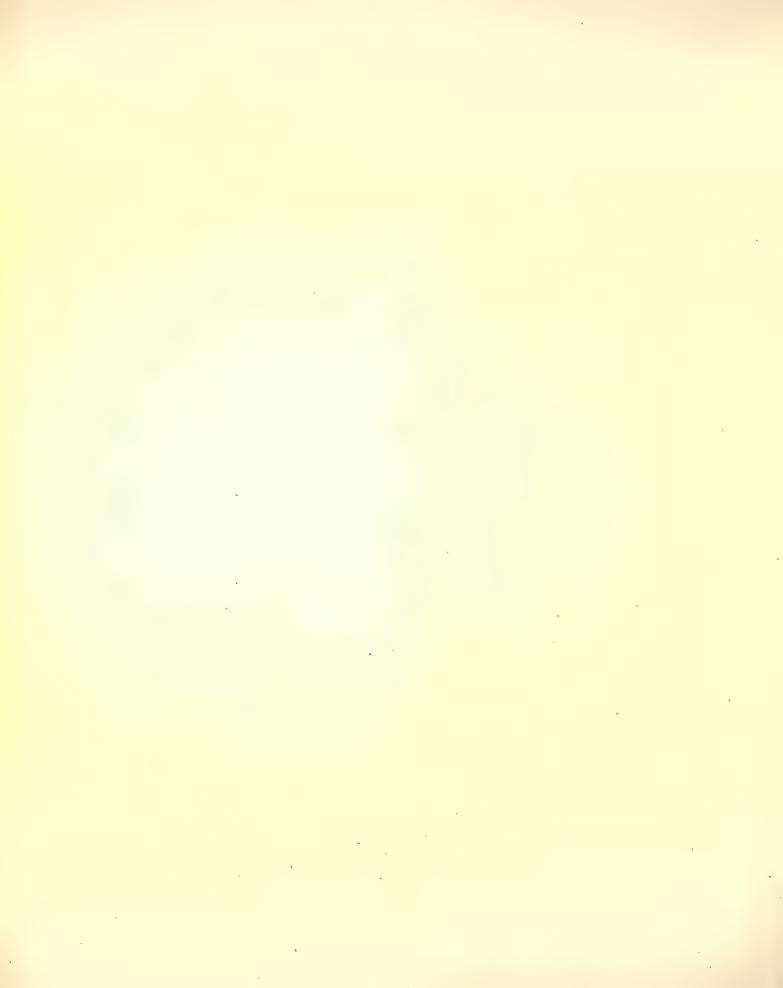


THE OLD PALACE OF BROMLEY

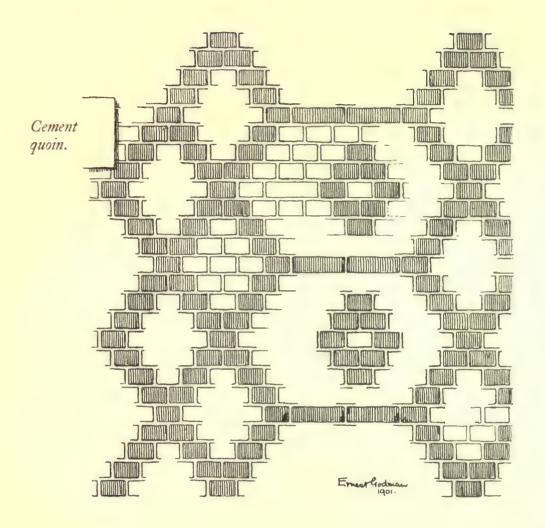




FRIEZE FROM NORTH-WEST ROOM, ON FIRST FLOOR.

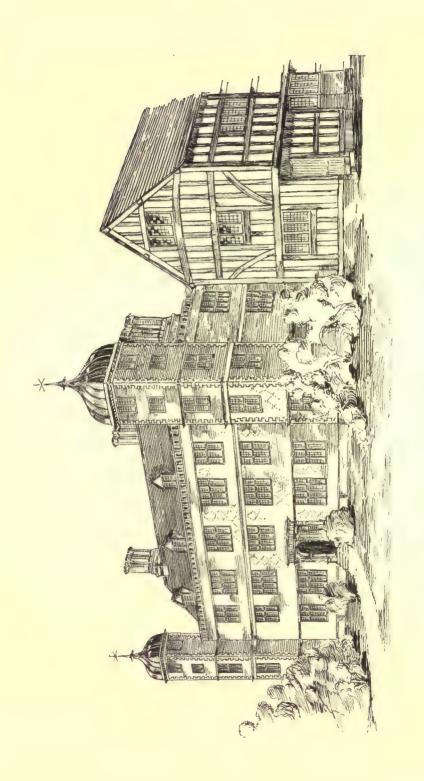






DECORATION ON BRICKWORK OF CHIMNEY STACK, SOUTH SIDE OF HOUSE.

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